THE OLD APPLE TREE.

BY J. F. I.

The golden sun was sinking within the far-off west,
As 'neath the apple tree in the yard my grandpa sat at rest;
The dew was gently falling, the birds had ceased to sing,
And nature everywhere sent forth the tender shoots of spring.

'Neath the apple tree, on a rustic, sat grandpa with his cane,
And watching the cattle coming home along the dusty lane;
And the golden rays of sunlight fell on his silvery hair;
I stood and watched in silence the light so strangely fair.

Then I said: "Grandpa, the sunlight that steals through yon thick bough
Makes the hair look just like silver threads that lie upon your brow."
His mind began to wander back to the by-gone past,
And he said, "Oh, Willie, 'tis strangely queer that things do change so fast!

"'Tis forty years or more, I guess, since this tree was planted here;
'Twas but a tender sapling then, but now it shelters me;
'Tis growing still, and healthy yet, its leaves are green and fair,
But ah, alas! time's silvery frosts have powdered white my hair."

I saw a teardrop slowly steal down grandpa's wrinkled cheek;
He leaned his head upon his cane, and then he ceased to speak.
I left him then to meditate, in the sunlight warm and fair,
Upon the past and things so changed since he wore golden hair.

The old apple tree is living yet, but grandpa now is dead,
And in the eve I often think how its thick, dark shade it shed
Upon the silken snow-white hair of grandpa's aged head.

I love that tree, I always shall; I call it "Grandpa's tree,"
And when I dream I sit beneath its shade, it brings fond thoughts to me;
The longer life is lent to me I love it more and more,
Because around it memories cling of him I loved of yore.

IN THE NORTH ROOM.

BY CLARA MERWIN.

I am an old bachelor.

If there is a human being whose nerves are made of steel, I am that individual.

I have never once lost my presence of mind.

I don't believe in ghosts, of course.

I'm not a sentimental man, and have never been in love.

Once, when I was a young man, I thought that I was in love with a pair of brown eyes and a head of golden hair, long, dark lashes, and a skin like peach bloom. I lost my usual good sense for a while and proposed to Polly Bashfield, and was accepted. But I soon grew tired of my pretty toy, and I began to see that "a young man married would be a young man married;" the girls had lost all interest in me, and the married ladies took to snubbing me. I had not half the nice invitations I used to have, and, besides, old Mr. Bashfield failed, and Polly's fifty thousand vanished into thin air. She would have *nothing* on marriage instead of being an heiress; and so one day I told her we had both made a mistake, and she said probably I was the best judge, and gave me back her ring. It had a nice diamond in it, and I had it set for a shirt-stud at once.

And, *of course*, I sent her back her letters, and she returned mine; and after that we never met again. I got out of the affair more easily than most fellows do, and I've never got into such a one again. Perhaps, when I'm old and begin to break down a little, I shall marry some nice young girl and settle down comfortably. It's a pretty good thing to do *then*, but not before one is past fifty.

Well, as I said, I saw no more of Polly, and I forgot all about her in a few years. I stand before you a practical man, untrammeled by any sort of superstition, with a good income, good health, and enjoying my life; and in this condition I walked in at the door of Mrs. Regan's confounded little old house at exactly half-past ten on the 24th day of August, 1886.

We had started for the Mountain House, I and Bradley, and his trap had broken down, and here we were on a rough road, with our journey not half way over, Catskill as far behind us as the Mountain House was before us; both of us as hungry as hunters; both of us dead tired.

"We can't go on," said Bradley.

"We can't go back," said I. Then over the stone fence popped a sun-bonnet, and some one cried, "Your wheel has come off, han't it?" And on my answering that it had, and that I should like to know what we were going to do that night, the sun-bonnet replied, "Why, do tell, to be sure. Well, now, and everybody is chock full of summer boarders, and so be I. But I guess I can figger it if I do a little headwork. I'll put them Jackson boys to sleep with our Sam, and I'll make the help go on to the settee, and one of you shall have the kitchen chamber and one the north room if you want. And my old man, he's a wheelright by trade, and he'll jigger your wheel for you in two shakes of a sheep's tail."

We looked at each other. I did not know how long it took a sheep to shake its tail, nor whether "jigger" was technical or local. I don't know yet; but I smelt coffee and ham and eggs somewhere, and doubtless so did Bradley. "We shall be only too glad to accept your hospitality," said he.

"Dollar a day," said she; "*that's* cheap enough."

"So it is," said Bradley. "Come, Hamilton."

I came. What would I have done to a waiter who presented me with such a supper at the club? But starvation does not discriminate. I ate heartily. And afterward, being asked to choose between the kitchen chamber and the north room, I said the north room, by all means. I had a vague idea that it would be farthest removed from the rest of the establishment.

It was a queer-looking place, with a chimney in the center, the roof running from a peak in the middle of the floor on either side. One square window and one sloping one, and bags, hams, ropes of onions, and suspended dresses adorned it in every direction. The bed was apparently stuffed with corn-cobs. The pillow was of hay, and the sheets smelled of camphor, and I had a kerosene lamp by way of illumination. Remembering my spring mattress and silk quilts lined with down at home, my velvet carpet, the pink and white shade for my gas, I wondered how I could endure it so calmly. But what should I have gained by making a fuss? Nothing, surely. Never trouble yourself about the inevitable; simply shut your eyes to it. I shut mine. Having puffed the kerosene lamp out, after a blue explosion of some kind, which made me wonder if I were to be a subject of a paragraph headed "Awful Accident" in the next morning's papers, I adjusted myself as well as possible between the softest corn-cobs.

"When one sleeps one forgets one's bed" said I. "Let me sleep." And totally refusing to hear the droning of a hideous insect with a broken back, who could walk, fly, climb, leap, wiggle, crawl—in short, who possessed every means of locomotion known to animated nature—I went to sleep. I awoke just as the moon was rising—about one o'clock. The light fell through the one straight window of my room and made a white square on the brown painted floor, and lit up a queer little green rocking-chair with a rush bottom. For one moment I saw the chair standing empty; the next a figure occupied it—the figure of a young girl. Her hair, which seemed to be golden, fell over her shoulders. Her back was toward me, but I saw that her figure was slight and pretty. Two white hands were clasped together, and she was rocking to and fro, and moaning in a strange, desolate sort of way.

"This is odd," said I. "Some one has come into the room by mistake, doubtless, not knowing I was here." I coughed. The young lady did not hear me. I spoke: "Madam," said I, "I presume you are not aware—in fact, that I am here."

Then the figure arose. It turned toward me, but again I could not see its face. Its back was to the moon. The outlines, strangely familiar, was all I could discern. The white robe that looked like a shroud trailed after it. The long hair floated over it.

I said to myself very calmly, "Were I a superstitious person I should consider this a ghost."

And still it came nearer, nearer. It was very embarrassing.

"Madam," I said again, more loudly, "I presume you are aware that I am here?" And a voice answered me—a voice I seemed to have heard before:

"Yes, I am aware of it. I came because I knew it—I came because I knew it!"

Then she began to moan again. She stood beside the bed now, only a few inches from me. She stretched out her cold hands. It was time to do something.

Whoever she was, I saw that she was dangerous. A maniac, perhaps. I put my hand under my pillow, where my pistol lay. I seized it.

"Whoever you are," said I, "I presume you are a thief, playing at ghost. Leave the room. I give three seconds to do it in. I count them; at the third count I fire. One—two—three."

As I said one she retreated, pointing at me. As I counted two she drew still further off. As I cried three she was gone! I lit that kerosene lamp and examined the room. The door was shut and locked on the inside; the windows fastened down with nails, as all windows are in rural houses. I looked behind the boxes and barrels and gowns. I felt the floor; there was no trap-door. Yet she was gone.

If I had been a superstitious idiot I should have said that I had seen a spirit. As it was, being a practical man, I at once argued with myself. Tough fried ham and something called "Injun puddin," whatever it may have been, had given me a nightmare; a nightmare in an unusual former, doubtless—a fair young girl in white, instead of Othello or a black dog. There were exceptions to every rule. I had a white nightmare in place of a black one, that was all.

Again I put out my kerosene lamp. Again I fitted myself between the corn-cobs. Again I slept. Again I woke, to find a figure—the same figure—bending over me. It was moaning still; but this time it was doing more. Two hands, as cold as ice, were about my throat, pressing hard upon it. I was being choked to death.

"What are you doing?" cried I, catching at my pistol again.

The cold hands dropped away. The figure retreated, vanished, as before. I made a new search, and I argued with myself again. "Nightmares always choke me," said I. "My white nightmare only did as others do." But this time, though I fitted myself in among the corn-cobs again, I found it harder to sleep, and though I slept at last, I awakened very soon—again with a hand at my throat, and a voice moaning softly: "Let me rest in my grave. I do not want to kill him. Let me rest."

My pistol once more drove the white figure away. But a nightmare was a more serious thing than I had imagined. Had I ever been fool enough to drink too much, I should have fancied myself the victim of delirium tremens. But a ghost! Bah! I gave no admittance to that thought for a moment. If the voice, the figure, the falling hair, the touch of the little hands, cold as they were, reminded me of some one I had known long ago—that was part of my disordered condition. "Never again," said I, "will I partake of that awful dish, 'injun puddin,' with m'lasses. Never."

I sat up after that and saw the sun rise for the first time in my existence. It was a chilly operation, as uncomfortable as most things are that are considered meritorious; cold baths and a Graham diet, for instance. I've never done it since. An awful horn tooted us down to breakfast, which was principally fat pork. When I came down the good woman of the house, already invisible at the end of a sun-bonnet, was talking to Bradley, who is—did I tell you? —an author, a writer of frightful stories in newspapers. She had found him out.

"To think it should be you," she said. "You don't look a bit like I thought. I guessed you had big black eyes and an elegant figger, but, lor, you can't help that—and how I did look out for the next number, while 'Elgira, or Fortune's Victim,' was being published. I read it every word, and when she died of love I cried. I didn't use to believe folks died of love once—but—lemme see—I guess it was fifteen years ago, I knew a case in actual life. Yes, sir. You could have made a story of it, no doubt. She died in this house, in the north room—as pretty a creature as ever you saw. Her eyes were, oh! how brown, and such lovely golden hair! Her father brought her out here one summer."

"'Mrs. Regan,' says he, 'I'm afraid my girl is in a decline, but we hope something from country air.'

"Says I, 'We'll do what we can, and mountain air is best of any, sir.'

"But pretty soon I saw that there was more than sickness to deal with. The night she died she told me. Yes, sir; it was a love affair. He had jilted her because her father lost his money. He'd failed, the old gentleman had. 'I loved him so much,' said she. 'I thought him so brave and true, and so fond of me, and it was all a mockery—every look a lie, every kiss an insult, since it did not come from his heart.'

"'But you should forget such a rascal. You should not go on loving a fellow like that,' said I. Then she sat up in bed; I shall never forget it. 'Oh, Mrs. Regan!' she said, 'it is just that—it is that I have grown to hate him so that I lie all night wishing that I could kill him, hating him as I never hated anything before. Sometimes I think I shall come back from the other world to do it. Ghosts are permitted to kill their murderers, they say, and he has murdered me. Yes, he has killed me; not only my body, but all the good, sweet, beautiful feelings I once had. They all died long ago. Hate, hate, hate—that is killing me. Hate of the man I once loved.'

"'Oh, let me send for the minister, my dear,' says I.

"But she made no answer. She never spoke again. She died that night. Poor child, she was very young.

POLLY BASHFIELD,
AGED EIGHTEEN.

"That is what is on her grave-stone in the burying-ground, if you'd like to look at it."

I don't know whether she said anything more. Bradley says I fainted. I don't admit it, but if I did, I vow it was that abominable supper. A ghost—bah! But I wouldn't sleep in that "north room" again for any fortune—practical man as I am.

THE CRAZY ENGINEER.

BY MRS. CLARA MERWIN.

At a small station in a vast rolling prairie of a Western State, there alighted from an express train running east a gentleman and his daughter, who, upon being recognized by the bystanders, were at once greeted by a loud cheer, for it was not often that the popular President of the railroad found time to visit the little town of Rayville, and also confer upon it a greater honor by bringing with him his lovely daughter Gracie, a maiden of twenty. The cheer caused a young man to glance out of a window of the smoking-car, and instantly jerking in again, he hurled a half-consumed cigar away, and with rapid steps sought the palace-car, and seizing from a seat he had vacated a short while before, for a quiet smoke, his goods and chattels, he bounded forth upon the platform, at the imminent risk of life and limb, for the train had already started.

The face of the young girl grew pale at the risk run by the young man, while her father, the railroad President, said quickly: "You are rash, sir."

Without a word, but raising his hat in reply, the young man walked into the hotel near by, and had barely time to register the name of "George Coventry, California," upon the books, when a cry from without caused him to again go to the door.

Far away over the prairie, the express train was flying, while in the other direction, coming on like the wind, was seen a large and very powerful locomotive.

"The dispatch engine! the dispatch engine!" was the cry of the crowd, and all eyes were turned in the direction of the coming locomotive, while Mr. Madison, the President, paused as he was about to enter a handsome carriage, and remarking quietly, "Gracie, dear, I must see what dispatches this man brings," turned and watched the approach of the great iron messenger.

A few moments more, and the engine stopped in front of the hotel, and the engineer, a tall, massive-built, smoke-begrimed man of about fifty, sprang to the ground, with a small black-leather sachel hung around his neck. "Is President Madison here?" he asked, abruptly, as he glanced around him.

"Ay, ay, my man," said the President; and, discovering him, the engineer walked forward and handed him the bag of dispatches, in reading which Mr. Madison was soon very deeply engaged, while the bearer stood silently by, his fiery dark eye bent upon the railroad king with an expression hard to fathom.

But suddenly his gaze sought the carriage that had been sent for Mr. Madison, and, falling upon the beautiful young face of Gracie, he started quickly, his huge form trembled, and even through the dust and smoke that besmeared his handsome face, he was seen to turn almost livid, caused by some inward emotion awakened in him.

"Girl, you must come with me—ha! ha! ha!" he cried, wildly. And ere any one could prevent he seized poor Gracie in his arms, a few mighty bounds and he had reached his engine, and, with a dexterity that was wonderful, he let on the steam, raised the brakes, and away the huge locomotive darted, leaving behind the two firemen that had accompanied the engineer, and who had gone into the hotel for refreshments.

"My God! He is mad! He is crazy! My daughter! My poor, dear Gracie!" cried Mr. Madison, like every one else present, unable to raise a finger to aid the frightened maiden.

"Ha! ha! ha!" came back the mocking laugh of the big engineer, as he sped away, leaving the crowd staring wildly after him.

"Is there no engine here?" suddenly cried a commanding voice; and the young man who had registered his name as George Coventry rushed from the hotel door.

"Yes; the express changed engines here; yonder 'tis, cooling up for the next train," cried a railroad official.

And away the young man rushed, to where the locomotive stood, sprang aboard, hurled aside the engineer and fireman, who would have prevented him, and the next instant away he was flying over the broad prairie, in hot pursuit of the man who had so boldly stolen poor Gracie Madison.

Every eye at the station was strained out over the prairie, first at the distant speck that denoted the fugitive locomotive, and then at the rapidly disappearing engine driven by brave George Coventry. On, on they flew, pursuer and pursued, the engines groaning beneath the pressure put upon them, and yet urged faster and faster, for the engineer fugitive suddenly saw that he was pursued, and recklessly did he let on steam.

Poor Gracie, still seated where her captor had placed her, but powerless to move, watched with aching heart the every action of the man before her, and heard with dread his mocking words:

"Ha, ha, ha, Gracie Madison, revenge has come at last, after many years; yes, many years. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my God, he is mad!" cried the unhappy girl, and then, as the shrill whistle shrieked forth its warning notes, she glanced ahead of her, and descried a station near at hand—no, 'twas past, for, like a flash of lightning, the huge engine had gone by and left the little hamlet far behind. Station after station was thus passed, for the telegraph had flashed along the wires to keep the road clear, for a crazy engineer was coming, and at every place gaping crowds stood gazing with horror at the wild speed at which the huge engine was urged.

A terrific roar, a shriek of the whistle, a gaunt form with haggard face peering ahead, the flutter of a gray dress, and the fugitive locomotive had gone by, to be followed the moment after by another loud wail of the whistle, a groaning sound from the crushing wheels, and the pursuing engine with the stern, pale face of George Coventry, had also darted by at a speed even greater than the pursued. "Oh, heaven, have mercy?" cried the frightened girl, and then a ray of hope came into her face as she saw the pursuing engine coming rapidly on after them.

On, on it came, each moment drawing nearer and nearer until, with a glad cry, Gracie recognized the man who was coming to her rescue as the one who had been her fellow-traveler during the day and had jumped so recklessly from the moving train.

Her cry caused the crazy engineer to glance backward, and a mocking laugh and bitter curse commingled upon his lips as he descried that hardly fifty yards now separated the two engines. But with set teeth and wild, glaring eyes he urged on his iron horse, whistling loudly for the next station in sight, while he hurled with one hand a few of the heaviest pieces of coal in the tender upon the track, in the hope of destroying his pursuer.

Yet on they swept by the station like a flash, and there Gracie discovered, drawn upon a switch to let them go by, the express train that had taken her to R——, and which had run one side as soon as they learned that a crazy engineer was behind them.

Still away they flew, and nearer and nearer came the pursuer until the two engines were fast together. "Drop down behind the tender," cried the ringing voice of George Coventry; and, obediently, Gracie shrunk down into the bottom of the engine, while the wild, harsh laugh of the crazy engineer rang out, to mingle the next instant with the sharp reports of a pistol, as shot after shot was fired, until half a dozen leaden messengers had been hurled after the mad engineer, who, with a low groan, sank down lifeless beside the frightened girl, for a bullet from George Coventry's pistol had pierced his brain.

An instant more and George Coventry was beside Gracie, having clambered over the rear of the engine, and raising her, half dead with fright, he said gently: "There is no danger now, Miss Madison, for I will stop our mad speed."

In a few moments he had brought the speed down, and in a short while ran quietly into the next station, where he handed the body of the crazy engineer over to the proper authorities, and escorted Gracie to a hotel to await the arrival of her father, who was instantly telegraphed of the safety of his daughter.

A few hours more and President Madison arrived, overjoyed at greeting alive and safe his darling daughter, and most enthusiastic in the praise of her brave preserver. "But come, Mr. Coventry, let us see about this poor madman," said Mr. Madison; and together they sought the place where the maniac had been taken to prepare for burial. One glance into the haggard face, now no longer besmeared with smoke and dirt, and Mr. Madison exclaimed: "Great heavens! it is Norton Morris."

"You knew him, then?" asked George.

"Yes. We were boys together; once the best of friends, and then rivals for the hand of Gracie's mother. I was the most successful, and poor Norton Morris went from home, became a drunkard, 'twas said, and for years I had not seen or heard of him.

"Yes, I know all now. His reason was unseated, and beholding me once more, and with me Gracie, who is the image of her dead mother, it drove him to seek a terrible revenge. Poor, poor Morris."

Much affected, Mr. Madison returned to acquaint his daughter with the sad particulars and story of the crazy engineer.

The following day the poor maniac was buried with honor, for Mr. Madison would have it so; and then the President and his daughter wended their way homeward, after having received a promise from George Coventry to visit them in a few weeks; for Mr. Madison had learned from the young man that he belonged to a good family in New Haven, but, having been rather wild while yet in his teens, had run away and gone to California to seek his fortune, and, having found it, was returning to his parental roof-tree, as a prodigal son, to beg forgiveness for the follies of his earlier years.

True to his promise George Coventry sought the home of the Madisons, and his visit extended over a week's duration; for between the beautiful Gracie and her brave preserver a feeling of true love had sprung up, which had found place in the heart of the young man "at first sight," for he confessed that he had loved her from the moment he saw her on the train, and had only stopped at R—— when he suddenly discovered from the smoking-car that her father had gotten off there.

It was a pure love match; ran smoothly through loverhood; and, as married people, no two happier beings live than do these two, whose wooing was brought about through the wild act of the crazy engineer.

The Funny Armadillo.

The armadillo lives in South America. His name there is bolito, or "little ball," because he rolls himself up in his shell so that he can be tumbled about like a ball. The bands of shell are flexible and overlap near the tail; the collar and tail cape are each in one piece, but slightly flexible; the face shield is loose except at the forehead. When alarmed the animal will curl up quickly and hold his shell as tight as a closed oyster shell until the danger is past. His fore feet are made for burrowing, and are not of much use in walking, as he walks on tiptoe. The easiest way for him to get about is to roll, although he stays very close at home. Sometimes a pair of armadillos will have ten babies that keep the parents busy when the babies are weaned. They eat insects principally, but will eat carrion. The monkeys find great pleasure in teasing the armadillos. The shriek of delight when a monkey discovers bolito taking an airing will bring a dozen of the chattering creatures to the spot. They roll him about, poke their fingers into the cracks of his shell, screech, and scold until tired, but bolito never cheeps or relaxes a muscle until his tormentors leave him. —*New York Telegram.*

The "Torpid Liver" Myth.

Another silly notion that is widely prevalent is that relative to inaction of the liver. The term "torpid liver" is in every one's mouth, and is held to account for every bad feeling, whether it be due to excess in eating or drinking, late hours, lack of muscular exercise, excitement over bad ventures on the market, or other form of dissipation. The liver is quite an important organ, and has much to do with the secondary processes of digestion—those which go on after the stomach and pancreas have done their work—but it is innocent of most of the sins laid at its door. The bile is manufactured in large amounts daily, but we know positively of but few uses to which it is put in the body, and of still fewer drugs that are able to increase the daily output. If we were certain that we could, at will, stimulate the huge gland to secrete more bile, it is very uncertain that any benefit would result from "arousing it from its torpor."—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

Too Short.

Society girl—"Johnny, where's your fish pole."

Small brother—"Up in the attic; what do you want of it?"

"I dropped my opera glasses into my hat when I got home from the matinee, and they're caught there."

"How far up?"

"Near the top."

"No use gettin' the pole, then; 'taint long enough to reach 'em.—*Tid-Bits.*

CONCERNING the use of tea and coffee by children, Dr. J. W. Putnam, of Buffalo, says: "In these little people nothing but harm can come from the use of such cerebral stimulants as tea and coffee. I speak emphatically, because not only among the poor and uneducated, but among the rich, who should know better, this practice is marvelously prevalent. Childhood is the period when the nervous activity is at its greatest. The nervous system is pushed to its utmost capacity, and long is the list of victims that follow its over-stimulation."—*Dr. Foote's Health Monthly.*

"WELL," said an old gentleman," who stumbled as he was trying to make his way around a group of waltzers, "well, this is really working one's passage round the whirled."

Mexican Politics.

But the city is not only the capital, it is the center of all the political life of the republic. For in all outward forms this is a federal republic. The city and its environs form the federal district in the State of Mexico. Besides this State there are twenty-six other States, each with its Governor and local legislature, its system of schools. The federal constitution is a model one; there is all the machinery of a republican government, two elected houses, a President popularly chosen for a term of six years, who is ineligible again until a term has intervened. But the President is in fact elected by agreement among a knot of leaders, and the office is a matter of arrangement, bargained for usually a long time in the future. Every Governor of a State is practically dictated by this little junta at the capital; and every officer, even to mayors of cities, is so chosen. It is the most purely personal government in the world. Whatever elective forms are gone through with, this is the fact. When the first term of Diaz expired, Gonzales came in by arrangement; when the latter retired it was to a governorship. Diaz has a preponderance of Indian blood, Gonzales of Spanish.

In his first term Diaz took an enlightened view of the needs of Mexico and its external relations. He invited capital and promoted railways by liberal subsidies. The railways were built; the subsidies have not been paid. The country was infested with brigands. These brigands were not Indians, but of the mixed Spanish race who had possessions, and took to the highways only on occasion, or when the country was politically disturbed. Vigorous efforts were made to suppress this by the Government. Gonzales had the reputation of being the head of these quasi-brigands. When he came into power brigandage was still more effectively suppressed. People say that his method was to put all the brigands in office, make them Governors, Mayors, and high district officials, where they could make more than by intercepting caravans, stopping diligences, and carrying off owners of haciendas. And it is universally believed in Mexico that Gonzales, in his term of four years, saved out of his salary between twelve and eighteen millions of dollars, which is now well invested. These leaders are astute diplomatists, as wary and as supple and subtle as the Turks. Whoever makes a treaty with them is likely to be confused by the result. Whoever invests money in Mexico, either in public works or private enterprise, does so at his risk. Any basis of confidence is wanting in business. The Mexicans do not trust each other. They always seem surprised when a foreigner does as he said he would do. The moral condition is something like that of Egypt. The atmosphere of Egypt is one of universal lying. We who are accustomed to do business on universal faith—the presumption being that a man is honest until the contrary is proved—cannot understand a social state where the contrary is the assumption.

One can readily grant to Diaz patriotic intentions, and the desire to have Mexico take an honorable place in the world; but justice is not had priceless in the courts—the officials are all serving their own interests, and official corruption is universal. And yet travel is now safe, public order is maintained, and there is marked progress in education. Still, whatever the government is, there is no public, no public opinion, no general comprehension of political action, no really representative government or representative election. There are few newspapers, the people are not informed, and the mass of them are indifferent so long as they are personally not disturbed. In only one case (the action of the Congress in regard to the English debt—action promoted by a determined demonstration of the students of the city) has there been any sign of the independence of the Legislature. Mexico remains, in effect, a personal government with no political public. I am making no sweeping declaration as to the character of the mongrel population; it has its good points. These will appear as we travel farther.—*Charles Dudley Warner, in Harper's Magazine.*

A Little Postal War.

A New York merchant received an account sent by a Cincinnati house in which there was an error of 4 cents. The latter wrote about it. The postage on the letter was 25 cents, payable on delivery. Indignant at such a payment, and determined to punish the New York merchant, the Cincinnati house inclosed him by mail a package containing several old papers, on which the New York merchant had to pay $2 postage. The New York merchant returned by mail a package, the postage on which cost the Cincinnati house $5. This was continued, to the benefit of the postoffice fund, to the extent of $80, when the Cincinnati house sent by mail the "log-book" of a ship, for which the New York merchant paid $17 in postage, and gave in that he was beaten.—*Dry Goods Chronicle.*

The Orator.

Gladstone says it is the business of an orator to give back to his hearers as rain what he has received as mist. The effective orator utters the thoughts of his auditors, and not his own, but better than they could. He must say what they wished they had said.

IT is related that in England a school inspector who delighted in "common sense questions," propounded this: "If I met you coming down the village street and said 'Animal! animal!' what would you say?" The right answer remains a mystery; the real one ran: "Saa! I shud saa yeow was a fule." Undaunted, the examiner next asked why the sea is salt? He got three answers: One, "Because of the Yarmouth bloaters;" one, "To keep the drowned folk sweet," and one from a pious little maiden, "Because God made it so."

AT the close of 1886 the American Association of Science, according to the report of the permanent Secretary, had 1886 members. Of these, 631, being specially engaged in scientific work, had been elected to the rank of fellows.

HUMOR.

FLINT-LOCKS—a miser's hair.—*Texas Siftings.*

THE wearing of the green—a game of billiards.

IT is wise stock that knows its own par.—*Life.*

DINNER—"Waiter, I see you have got turtle soup on the menu. Is it mock turtle?" Waiter—"No, sir, mud."

THE question about extending a call turns sometimes on the age of the parson; the question of accepting it, or the parsonage.

A MAN and his wife are buried in the same grave, and the stone bears the inscription: "Their warfare is accomplished."

A YOUNG man wants to know how to bring out a mustache. Tie a cord around it tightly, hitch the cord to a post and then run backward.

"ISN'T it heavenly?" ejaculated Miss Gush in reference to Miss Pedal's performances on the piano. "Yes," replied Fogg, "it is indeed heavenly; it sounds like thunder."

"THIS is one of the silent watches of the night," remarked Fangle, as he looked at his timepiece on rising one morning and finding that it had stopped at 11 p. m.—*Pittsburg Chronicle.*

A FASHION item says that "a ball dress should be plain enough to show off the material." The object now appears to make it brief enough at the top to show off a considerable portion of the wearer.—*Norristown Herald.*

"WOULD you like it better if I wrote only on one side of the paper?" asked a poet who has been afflicting us greatly of late. No, we would not. We would like it better if you refrained from writing on any side.—*Texas Siftings.*

CLIENT—"Now, Mr. H——, isn't your fee rather large?" Lawyer—"I am sorry you think so, Mr. B——; but you must remember I had a great deal to do. I spent a great deal of time preparing my charge for the jury." Client—"Great Scott! Do I pay the jury?"—*Boston Budget.*

"DO YOU know," said Miss Beekon Hill to Miss Murray Hill, "that your friend from the West asked me last night at the reception who wrote 'Gray's Elegy?'" Miss Murray Hill giggled and responded, in italics: "You don't say so!" and then, thoughtfully, "by the way, who *did* write it?"—*Boston Commercial Bulletin.*

"DON'T you think," said Mrs. Keeper, "that when Adam realized the vastness of the world into which he had been ushered he must have had a great deal on his mind?" "Well," responded Mrs. Blunt, "from the photograph I have seen of him, I should say that whatever he did have on must have been on his mind."—*The Judge.*

"MY dear," said an anxious wife to her husband, who was running for office, "we must economize in every possible way." "I do economize," he replied. "Yes," she said, bitterly, "you spend ten or fifteen dollars a day in treating a lot of bar-room loafers to beer and whisky just to get them to vote for you. Do you call that economy?" "Certainly; that's political economy."

A GOOD story is told on the Governor here in Chico. J. W. B. Montgomery had been tendered the position of Brigadier General of the Fifth Brigade, and went to Sacramento to consult with the Governor about the matter. He walked into the latter's office and remarked: "Well, Governor, I have come to tell you that I will accept that office as long as there's peace, but I want it understood that in case of war you are to accept my resignation." "O," replied Commander-in-Chief Bartlett, "that's all right. If there's ever a war I propose to resign myself."—*Chico (Cal.) Enterprise.*

The Biters Were Bitten.

One of the slickest tricks I ever saw was performed in a Denver faro-room. The boys had been hitting the bank pretty heavy, and, although it was early in the night, the bank was several thousand dollars loser. Dave Keets was running the game, and finally took the deal himself. Half an hour had passed, when one of the players asked for a cigar. Dave said to the stranger, in the most natural way imaginable:

"Try one of these. It is a brand I smoke myself," and he began fumbling in a lower drawer, his head being below the table.

The "lookout" at this moment turned his head to address a remark to a bystander, and the box was left unprotected. In that brief space of time a small fortune was lost. The stranger who had asked for the cigar reached over, and, shoving the top card, disclosed the queen of hearts, and then replaced it before the dealer resumed his position. Handing over the cigar, Dave made a motion to shove the top card, but half a dozen voices called to him to hold up. Of course, he waited, and a look of surprise passed over his face as every one began to copper the queen, and inside of five minutes every cent in the room—$12,000—was coppered on that queen. Finally everyone was ready, and amid a silence in which I thought I heard the thumping of one man's heart, Dave shoved the top card, disclosing that selfsame queen of hearts, and everybody breathed easier until another push and the queen of diamonds lay bare. There were a number of groans and one oath or two, but the man who wanted a cigar had disappeared, and the bank took in half of all bets made in a silence forced by the consciousness that the biters had been bitten.—*Washington Critic.*

Life.

Life consists not in the abundance of things that we possess, but in the good and honest work that we do. Let us vow that we will live, not to lade our souls with the thick clay of earthly riches—not to daub our lives with the untempered mortar of human praise—not to waste our labors on those gains of the wilderness which can neither satisfy the soul's hunger nor quench its thirst, but for what is best and greatest.

ON life's highway slander takes toll from reputations.